



Facing the media
U.S. Coast Guard photo

Protecting Infrastructure; Public Communication; Role of the Media

Critical Infrastructure

Hurricane Katrina had a devastating impact on many types of critical infrastructure – “Systems and assets,” according to the National Response Plan, “whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.”¹

The New Orleans levee system naturally received the most attention, but Katrina also placed the nation’s energy supply, chemical-production capacity, and fuel pipelines in serious jeopardy. The disaster highlighted the need for industry and government coordination to assess the implications of the damage to such infrastructure, to prioritize the restoration of specific infrastructure, and to have mechanisms in place to facilitate restoration.

Because of the lack of coordinated restoration plans, significant infrastructure problems were left to be addressed in ad-hoc manner:

- Immediately after landfall, the Colonial Pipeline, a 5,519-mile system that transports fuel from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to distribution points throughout 12 states and the District of Columbia,² reported that two major lines were shut down due to power outages. The company dispatched generation equipment, but FEMA regional representatives – understandably – diverted the generators to hospitals.³ However, additional planning would have readied enough generators for both purposes. It was not until a full week after the storm that the Colonial Pipeline was restored to full capacity.⁴ The Colonial pipeline is one of two key pipelines that carries up to 100 million gallons of gas, heating oil, and other petroleum products to the Southeast and the East Coast.⁵ A sustained shut-down could have a serious impact on the nation’s energy supply.
- A flooded chemical plant that manufactured liquid hydrogen used by NASA and the Air Force and in the finishing process of some steel parts did not receive dewatering assistance from the Army Corps of Engineers until September 5.⁶ This plant alone was responsible for 31 percent of North America’s industrial-hydrogen production, and consequently NASA agreed to share its stored supply of hydrogen with the Department of Defense to compensate for this lost production.⁷
- The restoration and maintenance of critical telecommunications infrastructure was beset by a variety of security challenges, including the need to provide security for facilities and equipment, for repair crews, and for convoys bringing in fuel and other supplies.⁸ BellSouth’s struggles provide one example of this, and the company’s security issues wound up being addressed through a patchwork of means. The Louisiana State Police escorted employees out of the build-

ing when BellSouth had to evacuate its New Orleans Main Central Office on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 30 (the day after landfall) because of reports of violence.⁹ The following day, BellSouth sought help from the U.S. Marshals Service to protect their facility.¹⁰ The Department of Justice, after coordinating through FEMA pursuant to Emergency Support Function-13 (ESF-13) of the National Response Plan (NRP),¹¹ agreed to send in U.S. Marshals to secure the facility, and sent in FBI agents by helicopter until the marshals could arrive.¹² In addition, state police provided security for convoys of fuel and water.¹³ BellSouth also needed assistance to provide security for their repair crews. The National Communications System (NCS),¹⁴ after going through the ordinary ESF process, and with the consent of FEMA, sought this further assistance from DOD, which forwarded the request to the Louisiana National Guard.¹⁵ In the end, however, security arrangements with the Louisiana National Guard fell through and BellSouth ended up arranging for private security protection for its workers.¹⁶ Pre-existing arrangements concerning security for such critical infrastructure could have eased these challenges and helped to facilitate the speedy restoration of the telecommunications infrastructure.

The federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector all are responsible for planning to protect and restore critical infrastructure. Within the federal government, Congress has assigned the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) a leadership role on critical infrastructure, including the task of developing a national plan for protecting it.¹⁷ Unfortunately, DHS has lagged in its responsibility to develop this plan and to create a meaningful inventory with prioritization for securing the nation's key assets. Although DHS issued an interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) in February 2005 and a draft version of the final plan in November 2005 that proposes to assess vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure and prioritize protective measures, it still has not implemented the final plan.¹⁸ If the prioritization of vulnerable critical infrastructure had been completed prior to Katrina, it may have been helpful for coordinating restoration of that infrastructure.

Currently, the NRP, the comprehensive federal framework for managing major domestic incidents, divides responsibility for restoring critical infrastructure among several Emergency Support Functions, each of which has different lead agencies.¹⁹ No cross-cutting entity under the NRP takes a comprehensive approach to setting critical-infrastructure restoration priorities – or attempts to address the many infrastructure interdependencies that exist. Nor does the NRP address the way in which federal agencies should work with state and local governments to respond to emergencies that affect critical infrastructure in their jurisdictions. It is important that the NRP address the roles of federal, state, and local governments and the private sector in restoring critical infrastructure. To this end, the NRP should be amended to have an Emergency Support Function that is responsible for assessing the damage to critical infrastructure, taking measures to mitigate the impact on the economy and national security, and restoring critical infrastructure. The Department of Homeland Security should be responsible for leading this Emergency Support Function, but it should have the involvement of the private sector, other federal agencies, and state and local governments, as appropriate.

Because approximately 85 percent of critical infrastructure in the United States is privately owned and operated,²⁰ and because private industry has vital information about its infrastructure, it is critical that industry actively work with the federal government in order to establish priorities for restoration. A model for private-sector involvement can be found in the DHS's draft NIPP that will establish 17 sector-specific coordination groups and a cross-sector council that can consider infrastructure interdependencies.²¹ According to DHS's draft plan, these sector-specific groups will include industry representatives and represen-

tatives from all levels of government (federal, state, and local) when appropriate that will develop sector-specific plans for sharing information, assessing the vulnerability of critical infrastructure, and implementing protection measures. These sector-specific groups would be a useful mechanism for acquiring the necessary stakeholder information to set priorities for the restoration of critical infrastructure and coordinating private sector and government efforts to achieve prioritization goals.

Media and Public Affairs – ESF-15

Rumors proliferate in times of war, civil unrest, and natural disaster. If widespread and sensational, they can become disruptive – and become news events in themselves. The public suffers when federal, state, and local governments tasked with disseminating public health, safety, and security information fail to do their jobs as envisioned by emergency-response planning.

Media and Government's Role

It is essential that the news media receive accurate disaster information to circulate to the public. News media can also help inform the public by reporting on rumors and soliciting evidence and comment on their plausibility, if any. They may inadvertently do damage by reporting on rumors without seeking context or confirmation, or by presenting them as established facts. The *Evening Sun* newspaper of New York City announced this news atop its front page on April 15, 1912:

ALL SAVED FROM TITANIC AFTER COLLISION
RESCUE BY CARPATHIA AND PARISIAN; LINER IS BEING
TOWED TO HALIFAX AFTER SMASHING INTO A ICEBERG.²²

The factual deficiencies of those headlines – based, if readers dove deeply enough into the article's text, on a passing reference to an unquoted report by parents of a ship's unnamed telegrapher – are now apparent, but they remind us that there is nothing new about the phenomenon of news media reporting rumor.

Nearly a century later, the proliferation of news outlets, the competition to be first with a powerful story, the technologies that make broad reach and rapid reporting possible, and the 24-hour cycle of Web and broadcast news can increase the chance that rumors will creep unlabelled or unchallenged into news stories. And when public officials fail to provide timely, accurate, and credible public information – or stand before microphones and cameras to spread rumors themselves – rumor can become a serious threat to civil order and to relief efforts.

For example, on August 29, the day of landfall, ABC's "World News Tonight" reported: "In New Orleans, entire neighborhoods are underwater, but the levees held. The nightmare scenario of an entire city underwater did not happen." Other broadcasters said: "New Orleans dodged the big bullet" (NBC's "Today" show, August 29) and "They dodged the bullet, but they still got a sound bruising" (National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation," August 29).²³ As the public learned later, on-the-scene reports by emergency officials, residents, and the press had already described flooding from levee breaches and overtopping several hours earlier. For example, Ivor van Heerden, the Director of Louisiana State University's Center for the Study of Public Health Impacts of Hurricanes, relayed that "the National Weather Service [is] reporting that one of the levees was breached ... as the reporters have said, there's very, very significant areas of New Orleans that did flood from the levee overtopping. In some areas we have about 11 feet of standing water. People have been forced out

onto the roofs of their homes.”²⁴ Yet as late as the next morning, August 30, there were still news items like this *Washington Post* report:

Some experts predicted the storm could become one of the worst catastrophes in U.S. history. But the city managed to avoid the worst of the worst. The Mississippi River did not breach New Orleans’s famed levees to any serious degree.²⁵

Others issued conflicting reports, even within their own stories.²⁶ Accurate reporting was at a premium, not only concerning the damage to the levees, but also with respect to security and law-enforcement issues, as discussed below.

Getting news from the field, through the editing process, and to the public, all under time pressure, is a challenge. While modern technology makes correction of mistaken reports easier and faster than in the days of the *Titanic*, thanks to the same technology, news travels that much more quickly in the first place, magnifying the potential damage of erroneous reports.

Government’s Public-Affairs Responsibilities in the Event of a Disaster

Accurate information is never as critical as during an emergency. It’s also never more difficult to obtain. Emergency-response planning – in this case, the NRP and the State of Louisiana’s Emergency Operations Plan (LA EOP) – tasks federal and state agencies with delivering reliable information to the public and the media in the event of a disaster.²⁷ During Hurricane Katrina, however, officials at all levels of government either failed to comprehend these roles or ignored these obligations, though there were times when officials understood and carried out their duties.

The NRP’s Public Affairs Support Annex directs DHS, in coordination with its component FEMA, to “mobilize” federal assets to deliver information to the public regarding emergencies as well as “use media monitoring ... and other techniques to identify rumors, misinformation, inaccurate reports ...” and rapidly correct them.²⁸ The NRP also calls for establishing a federal Joint Information Center (JIC) to support the Joint Field Office (JFO) with public-affairs matters and information dissemination during an emergency, at the location of the disaster, depending on the incident’s requirements.²⁹ However, the DHS reported that its federal JIC was not established until September 6 – over a week after Hurricane Katrina made landfall.³⁰

State emergency agencies coordinate with the federal effort. The Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (LOHSEP) has primary responsibility for “initiating, organizing and coordinating all aspects of Emergency Public Information,”³¹ including the activation of a state Joint Information Center which would incorporate federal communications activity.³² Yet it is not clear whether during the response to Hurricane Katrina a state JIC was established, although state officials maintained an information center in a trailer behind the Office of Emergency Preparedness in Baton Rouge, which provided briefings from this location every four hours.³³

Both federal and state agencies have mutual obligations to formulate a coordinated message. The NRP envisions the JFO, or federal JIC, to work “in close coordination with other JICs to integrate into a Joint Information System (JIS) providing consistent, coordinated, and timely information during an incident,”³⁴ and as stated above, the LA EOP envisions integrating federal communications activities into the state JIC. However, it appears this goal was not immediately carried out, or even understood, during the response to Hurricane Katrina.

A DHS/FEMA after-action report attributed some of the difficulty and, ultimately, the failure of federal and state officials to ensure a flow of accurate, timely information to factors including the overwhelming damage to communication infrastructure, the early lack of

co-location between federal (DHS/FEMA) and state public-information centers, reliance on field staff to relay information on sporadically functional equipment, and the pressure on public-information staff to react to media queries as opposed to pushing out new information.³⁵ Specifically, DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner testified before the Committee that his department found there should have been more cooperation between federal and state public-affairs officials.³⁶

Media Performance During Katrina

As for the media, some of the rumor traffic in Katrina derived from the reliance of reporters on dubious sources. A New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reporter later chastised himself for passing along unconfirmed a National Guardsman's comment that a freezer at the city's Convention Center held "30 or 40" bodies, and another soldier's comment that the dead included a "7-year-old with her throat cut." As Brian Thevenot, the *Times-Picayune* reporter, went on to note, "Neither the mass of bodies nor the allegedly expired child would ever be found," but the rumor was eventually traced to gossip in the food line at a nearby casino where military and police personnel were staging.³⁷

The impact of rumors – sharks swimming in downtown New Orleans, dead babies in trash cans, and stacks of bodies at the Superdome and the Convention Center – was compounded by misinformation from officials. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin told a nationwide TV audience about people "in that frickin' Superdome for five days watching dead bodies, watching hooligans killing people, raping people."³⁸ New Orleans Police Superintendent Eddie Compass reported that babies were being raped there.³⁹ Both statements were unfounded.

Inaccurate rumors reported without caveats, particularly with respect to law enforcement, included: "Violent gangs are roaming the streets at night, hidden by the cover of darkness" (Fox News), troops on rooftops looking for snipers as "gunfire crackled in the distance" (Los Angeles *Times*), "a young man run down and then shot by a New Orleans police officer" (Ottawa *Sun*), and "Girls and boys were raped in the dark and had their throats cut and bodies were stuffed in the kitchens while looters and madmen exchanged fire with weapons they had looted" (*Financial Times* of London).⁴⁰

The frequency and apparent authority of rumor-based reporting during Hurricane Katrina added to public confusion about events along the Gulf Coast. As two *Washington Post* investigators concluded:

The sensational accounts delayed rescue and evacuation efforts already hampered by poor planning and a lack of coordination among local, state, and federal agencies. People rushing to the Gulf Coast to fly rescue helicopters or to distribute food, water, and other aid steeled themselves for battle.⁴¹

Impact of Misinformation on Response Efforts

At 9:15 p.m. CT on Thursday, September 1, DHS issued a report that FEMA's search-and-rescue forces "ceased operations until National Guard can assist TF's [Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces] with security."⁴² James Strickland, a member of FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue team, explained that throughout the day there had been reports of shootings and rioting in the streets.⁴³

And at that point, we said, okay, we're not sending out any of our teams unless they have some type of force protection with them, which at the time was kind of scarce. ... So that day, by the time we got force protection keggered up with everybody, we had really lost most of the day, the daylight gone... If any went out, it was very limited as to what went out because we didn't have a sufficient protection plan.⁴⁴

Many private-sector telecommunications were delayed by similar anxieties. Jeff Glick, the Division Chief for Critical Infrastructure Protection at the National Communications System, said “[B]e they true or not, the perception that the [communications sector] crews felt that they weren’t safe, and the companies would not let them go into the area because of lack of being able to get enough security, slowed initial response and reconstitution of the communications net.”⁴⁵ Christopher Guttman-McCabe, the Vice President for Regulatory Affairs at Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, agreed: workers feared they would be “assaulted, stripped of whatever they had with them” when they entered the disaster area to conduct repairs.⁴⁶ Ultimately some companies hired private security guards to protect their employees.⁴⁷

Government’s Responsibilities to Disseminate Information About Public Health, Safety, and Security

Federal, state, and local governments must also disseminate information critical to the health, safety, and security of the public, which includes evacuation or decontamination instructions and warnings.⁴⁸ The NRP ascribes primary responsibility for this to state and local governments; when catastrophic events have overwhelmed state and local authorities, the federal government must step in.⁴⁹ However, no level of government provided adequate safety information to the public during Hurricane Katrina.

For example, neither DHS, through its component FEMA, nor Louisiana, nor New Orleans issued warnings about levee breaches or rising flood waters, though DHS/FEMA issued several other warnings, including one cautioning evacuees not to return to disaster areas prematurely.⁵⁰ Nicol Andrews, FEMA’s Deputy Strategic Director for Public Affairs, testified that she did not consider warning the public about the flooding nor even discuss it with colleagues, other than FEMA Director Michael Brown and one other FEMA official:⁵¹

That is not an action that FEMA has traditionally taken in the past; nor would I ever assume that it would be appropriate in this case. ... Public safety is not in the National Response Plan. It is not a FEMA responsibility. ... I’m not sure what good it would do to notify the public that the levees had been breached, even if it were a FEMA responsibility – which it’s not.⁵²

When Ms. Andrews, one of only five individuals who accompanied Director Brown to Louisiana as staff support,⁵³ was asked why she thought it would do no good to notify the public of the levee failures she said:

Where are they going to go? I mean, the city had been evacuated and the roads closed. ... And again, evacuation and sheltering – also not roles that FEMA can take care of. It would not have helped the situation at all. ... And it certainly, again, wouldn’t come from FEMA.⁵⁴

These comments are inconsistent with responsibilities assigned under the NRP. FEMA’s Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Thomas Bossert, has acknowledged that communicating information to the public is “crucial.”⁵⁵

The state also failed to effectively notify its citizens of levee failures. Louisiana never activated the Emergency Alert System that could have disseminated both audible and visual warnings to the public through radio and TV stations.⁵⁶ The New Orleans Emergency Operation Plan’s Hurricane Annex indicates that the city intended to rely on the Emergency Alert System as “the primary means of advising the public of a localized emergency.”⁵⁷

The failure of government officials on all levels contributed to rumor mongering and circulation of inaccurate and confusing information, significantly impeding response efforts.

This was one of the greatest repercussions of the failure to grasp federal and state emergency-response planning.

1 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Plan*. Washington: Government Printing Office, Dec. 2004, Appendix I, p. 64 [hereinafter *NRP*]. The language mirrors the statutory definition at 42 U.S.C. § 5195c(e).

2 Colonial Pipeline Company, "Company Profile," 2006. http://www.colpipe.com/ab_main.asp. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2006; U.S. Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*. Washington: Government Printing Office, Feb. 2006, p. 61 [hereinafter *The White House, Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*].

3 *The White House, Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, p. 61; Colonial Pipeline Company, "Colonial Pipeline Plans to Restore Partial Service by this Weekend," press release, Aug. 30, 2005. http://www.colpipe.com/press_release/pr_72.asp. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2006.

4 Office of the Vice President, Domestic Policy, "Energy," Draft, Sept. 6, 2005. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates no. 002746; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Spot Report #22, Sept. 6, 2005, 6 a.m., p. 5. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates no. DHS 0001465.

5 Colonial Pipeline Company, "Company Profile," 2006. http://www.colpipe.com/ab_main.asp. Accessed on Mar. 16, 2006.

6 Paul Adams, "Hurricane washes over U.S. Economy; Katrina's wake," *Baltimore Sun*, Sept. 6, 2005; Sandra I. Erwin, "Commerce Dept. Seeks Data on Industries Affected by Katrina," *National Defense Magazine*, Nov. 2005. www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/issues/2005/Nov/UF-Commerce.htm. Accessed on Feb. 26, 2006.

7 Sandra I. Erwin, "Commerce Dept. Seeks Data on Industries Affected by Katrina," *National Defense Magazine*, Nov. 2005. www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/issues/2005/Nov/UF-Commerce.htm. Accessed on Feb. 26, 2006.

8 Testimony of Peter Fonash, Ph.D., Deputy Manager and Director, National Communications System, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, before the U.S. Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, hearing on *Hurricane Katrina: Managing Law Enforcement and Communications in a Catastrophe*, Feb. 6, 2006.

9 Written Statement of William L. Smith, Chief, Technology Office, BellSouth Corp., for the U.S. Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, hearing on *Hurricane Katrina: Managing Law Enforcement and Communications in a Catastrophe*, Feb. 6, 2006, p. 8.

10 James McAtamney, e-mail to Bill Mercer and others, Aug. 31, 2005, 4:07 p.m. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates nos. DAG 00000140 through 00000141.

11 *NRP*, p. ESF#13-1 (providing that DHS and DOJ are responsible for coordinating the federal government's public safety and security support under the *NRP*). Peter Fonash testified that NCS also played a role in coordinating assistance from the FBI and U.S. Marshal Service. Written Statement of Peter Fonash, Deputy Manager and Director, National Communications System, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, for the U.S. Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, hearing on *Hurricane Katrina: Managing Law Enforcement and Communications in a Catastrophe*, Feb. 6, 2006, p. 7.

12 Robert Trono, e-mail to James McAtamney and Bill Mercer, Aug. 31, 2005, 6:14 p.m. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates no. DAG 00000140.

13 Committee staff interview of Jeffrey Glick, Chief, Critical Infrastructure Protection Division, National Communications System, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, conducted on Feb. 3, 2006, transcript p. 59; Written Statement of Smith, Senate Committee hearing, Feb. 6, 2006, p. 8.

14 The National Communications System is a component of the Department of Homeland Security which is designed to provide communications support during emergencies.

15 Tom Wetherald, e-mail to Peter Fonash and others, Sept. 3, 2005, 9:37 p.m. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates nos. DHS-INFP-0002-0000737 through 0000738. *See also*: Glick interview, Feb. 3, 2006, p. 60 (explaining NCS's efforts to work through the NRCC and ESF-13 process as well as with the National Guard).

16 Fonash, Senate Committee hearing, Feb. 6, 2006.

17 "Homeland Security Act of 2002," (P.L. 107-296), 6 U.S.C. § 201.

18 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan version 1.0, Base Plan*, Nov. 2, 2005, pp. 50-51. Provided to Committee [hereinafter *Draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, Nov. 2, 2005]. *See also*: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, Feb. 2005. <http://www.newsecurityconcepts.com/DataFiles/interim-nipp.pdf>. Accessed on Apr. 28, 2006 [hereinafter *Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, Feb. 2005].

19 The ESFs include: Transportation, Communications, Public Works and Engineering, Agriculture, and Energy.

20 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Protected Critical Infrastructure Information Program: Program Over-

view.” http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0465.xml. Accessed on Apr. 30, 2006.

21 *Draft National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, Nov. 2, 2005, pp. 50-51.

22 Southampton, England City Council, “Titanic – A Southampton Story: What the Papers Said,” www.southampton.gov.uk/leisure/local-history-and-heritage/historical-records/titanic/papers.asp. Accessed on Mar. 1, 2006. The Titanic sailed from Southampton, which was home for most of her crew.

23 John Burnett, Talk of the Nation, NPR, “Hurricane Katrina Update,” Aug. 29, 2005, 2 p.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis; Charles Gibson, World News Tonight, ABC, “World News Tonight Introduction,” Aug. 29, 2005, 6:30 p.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis; Brian Williams, Today Show, NBC, “Superdome Structurally Sounds Despite Loosing Part of the Roof,” Aug. 29, 2005, 7 a.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis.

24 Ivor van Heerden, Fox News, “Special Coverage: Hurricane Katrina Pounds New Orleans,” Aug. 29, 2005, 5 p.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis. In addition, Jeanne Meserve, a CNN Correspondent, described the situation in New Orleans: “I am looking over a scene of utter devastation. In an entire neighborhood, water has come up to the eaves of the houses and am told this is not the worst of it. . . . I’m told the main part of the ward further down is even worse. The water is over the houses.” *Source*: Jeanne Meserve, Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees, CNN, “Hurricane Katrina Slams Gulf Coast,” Aug. 29, 2005, 7 p.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis. Also, the *Times Picayune* reported at 2 p.m. CT from the 9th Ward on the day of landfall: “Meanwhile, City Hall confirmed a breach of the levee along the 17th Street Canal at Bellaire Drive, allowing water to spill into Lakeview.” *Source*: “Hurricane Katrina – The Storm Arrives,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, Aug. 29, 2005. Accessed on LexisNexis.

25 Peter Whoriskey and Guy Gugliotta, “Storm Thrashes Gulf Coast,” *The Washington Post*, Aug. 30, 2005, p. A01.

26 National Public Radio reported: “They dodged the bullet, but they still got a sound bruising.” The reporter went on to say: “The levee, . . . that surrounds the city of New Orleans has been breached in a couple of places by this storm.” John Burnet, Talk of the Nation, NPR, “Hurricane Katrina Update,” Aug. 29, 2005, 2 p.m. ET. Transcript accessed on LexisNexis.

27 *NRP*; Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (LOHSEP), *Emergency Operations Plan*, Apr. 2005, pp. ESF-15-1 through ESF-15-7 [hereinafter *Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan*]. The discussion in this section focuses only on the State of Louisiana, although presumably Alabama and Mississippi confronted similar issues. The *NRP* “ensures that sufficient Federal assets are deployed. . . .to provide accurate, coordinated, and timely information to affected audiences, including governments, media, the private sector, and the local populace.” *Source*: *NRP*, p. ESF-15-1. The Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan “provides information and external communications to inform people about the threat from natural. . . emergencies and disasters and the precautions and response measures that the State and local governments are taking to protect and preserve life and property.” *Source*: *Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan*, p. ESF-15-1.

28 *NRP*, pp. PUB-1, PUB-8.

29 *NRP*, p. 36.

30 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Situation Report #23, Sept. 6, 2005, 6 p.m., pp. 1, 21. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates nos. DHS-FRNT-0001-0001609, 0001629.

31 *Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan*, p. ESF-15-3.

32 *Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan*, pp. ESF-15-1, ESF-15-2.

33 Committee staff interview of Denise Bottcher, Press Secretary, Office of the Governor, LA, conducted on Jan. 9, 2006, transcript. p. 22.

34 *NRP*, p. 36.

35 FEMA, *DHS/FEMA Initial Response Hotwash: Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana*, New Orleans, Feb. 13, 2006, pp. 27-30.

36 Written Statement of Richard Skinner, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, for the U.S. Senate, hearing on *Hurricane Katrina: Recommendations for Reforms*, Mar. 8, 2006, p. 17 (“Both federal and Louisiana officials felt they could have provided a more positive and unified image to the press and the public had they combined their efforts from the beginning.”).

37 Brian Thevenot, “Myth-Making in New Orleans,” *American Journalism Review*, Dec./Jan. 2006. www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=3998. Accessed on Feb. 8, 2006.

38 Susannah Rosenblatt and James Rainey, “Katrina Rumors,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 27, 2005. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-rumors27sep27,0,3794602.story?coll=la-home-headlines>. Accessed on Mar. 13, 2006; Mayor C. Ray Nagin, The Oprah Winfrey Show, NBC, “Inside the Katrina Catastrophe,” Sept. 6, 2005, http://www.oprah.com/tows/pastshows/200509/tows_past_20050906.jhtml. Accessed on Mar. 30, 2006.

39 Susannah Rosenblatt and James Rainey, “Katrina Rumors,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 27, 2005; Eddie Compass, The Oprah Winfrey Show, “Inside the Katrina Catastrophe,” Sept. 6, 2005. http://www.oprah.com/tows/slide/200509/20050906/slide_20050906_102.jhtml. Accessed on Mar. 30, 2006.

40 Susannah Rosenblatt and James Rainey, “Katrina Rumors,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 27, 2005; Guy Dinmore, “City of Rape, Rumour and Recrimination: Inside New Orleans,” *Financial Times, London Edition*, Sept. 5, 2005, p. 7. Accessed on LexisNexis.

41 Robert E. Pierre and Ann Gerhart, “News of Pandemonium May Have Slowed Aid,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 5,

2005, p. A08.

42 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, HSOC Spot Report #53, Sept. 1, 2005, 10:15 p.m. Provided to Committee; filed as Bates no. DHS-FEMA-0055-0007629.

43 Committee staff interview of James Strickland, Team Member, Urban Search and Rescue, FEMA, conducted on Jan. 25, 2006, transcript p. 91.

44 Strickland interview, Jan. 25, 2006, p. 91.

45 Glick interview, Feb. 3, 2006, p. 59.

46 Committee staff interview of Christopher Guttman-McCabe, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, conducted on Jan. 24, 2006, transcript p. 25.

47 Guttman-McCabe interview, Jan. 24, 2006 p. 25.

48 *NRP*, p. PUB-2, PUB-6.

49 *NRP*, p. ESF-15-1.

50 FEMA, "Evacuees Cautioned Not To Re-Enter Damage Areas Prematurely," press release, Aug. 30, 2005. <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=18488>. Accessed on Mar. 9, 2006. Under the NRP and LA EOP, federal and state officials must adhere to responsibilities in emergency-response plans with respect to "immediate and continuing dissemination of health and safety instruction" and "to inform people about the threat from natural ... emergencies." *NRP*, PUB-6; *Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan*, p. 15-1.

51 Committee staff interview of Nicol Andrews, Deputy Director, Public Affairs, FEMA, conducted on Nov. 18, 2005, transcript pp. 13-14.

52 Andrews interview, Nov. 18, 2005, pp. 13-17.

53 Andrews interview, Nov. 18, 2005, pp. 9, 24-25.

54 Andrews interview, Nov. 18, 2005, pp. 16-17.

55 Committee staff interview of Thomas Bossert, Deputy Director, Legislative Affairs, FEMA, conducted on Dec. 20, 2005, transcript p. 98.

56 Ken Kerschbaumer, "Broadcasters Seek Better Emergency Alert System," *Broadcasting and Cable*, Sept. 12, 2005. <http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/CA6255755.html?display=Search+Results&text=kerschbaumer>. Accessed on Apr. 17, 2006. It is all the more important that emergency responders have plans to activate the EAS and exercise those plans so that the EAS is actually used, because Congress made a significant commitment to EAS when it authorized up to \$156 million in funding "to implement a unified national alert system capable of alerting the public, on a national, regional, or local basis to emergency situations by using a variety of communications technologies." (P.L.109-171) 42 U.S.C. § 3010.

57 New Orleans Office of Emergency Preparedness, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, May 2005.